

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

CHILEAN REACTION TO ARMS BAN

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A. Immediate Reaction

1. General public reaction. Chilean public reaction to the arms ban has been minimal. News stories have been buried in the international cable pages of the press, and the media have refrained from comment. Thus the Chilean public probably does not yet fully understand the meaning of the ban. When the GOC takes a position, or provides the media with a line to follow, we expect public opinion will follow along.

2. Junta reaction. We do not know specifically, but the ban is one of a continuing series of disappointments. The Junta saw it coming, although belatedly, and presumably had already discounted receiving significant US military help beyond that already committed, i.e. the A-37 and F-5 aircraft. The Junta members probably feel that the US Congress and public were successfully misled by Marxist propaganda. They will surely feel some resentment, and some dismay over the increase in the military imbalance with Peru which this arms ban signifies. *The Junta is apt to regard the action as reprehensible and of pressure and is evidence that the USG cannot be relied upon in a vital security area.*

3. Junta support. We doubt that the ban has evoked the loss of Junta support. It is too early, and the news has not yet been assimilated. We think it likely that any loss in support over the long term, presumably due to recognition that the Junta's human rights practices have cost Chile some US cooperation, will be offset by a patriotic "rally round the flag" reaction as Chilean world isolation becomes more evident and the Peruvian threat takes on added weight.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. Strength and aspirations of the Junta's opponents.

Whether the opponents are heartened depends on who is meant by "opponents." The Soviet Union and Cuba, some of the other countries who have either broken or strained relations with Chile, and the active UP opposition inside and outside Chile (i.e. the parties of the UP, etc.) will be pleased to see this evidence of increasing isolation of the GOC. They probably are somewhat strengthened.

We do not believe that the Christian Democrats should be classified as "opponents" of the Junta. The bulk of that party still does not want to see the Junta overthrown, knowing full well that the alternatives at the moment are worse, and

not as prohibitive as for as Peru is concerned.
1 The PDC in general wants some influence on the Junta and

improvements in its ways of doing things. The PDC would be heartened by GOC positive attempts to get out of its isolation, which could result in increased influence for it. A general toughening of the GOC line, however, might end up in confrontation, from which the PDC would likely emerge with even less influence and status than it has now.

The reaction of the MIR is irrelevant. It will be happy along with the other Junta-haters to see US support falling off, but it will not change its attitude. And, of course, the arms cut-off makes no difference in the ability of the security forces to hunt down/what remains of the MIR--this takes rifles, and good intelligence, not tanks.

full implication will take a while to sink in. It will be seen as making the Junta's job harder, but it is not the end of their world.

7. ~~We foresee~~ ^{There probably will be} no fundamental changes in foreign policy, as ~~likely,~~ ^{but} although the Junta may well make some ~~tactical~~ ^{be more enterprising} changes. It ~~cannot hope for much support from~~ ^{may seek to deepen its relations with} the Third World, which has ~~seen Chile in an unfavorable light,~~ ^{although} and Chile has no real community of interests with the communist countries that have maintained relations, ~~(the PRC and Romania),~~ ^{it might be tempted to try ploys of the PRC against the USSR} We expect the GOC will appoint some civilians to replace military ambassadors, and will open some missions in Africa, where Chile is now unrepresented. ~~But fundamental new departures in foreign policy are unlikely without an equally fundamental change in domestic policies, which it does not appear the GOC is willing to undertake.~~

8. Nasserist dreams. We do not see a radicalization of the regime, the confiscation of foreign property, or an inclination toward foreign adventures.

9. Junta unity. The Junta has been and is unified. As far as we can see, differences within the Junta are measured in relatively small degrees, and rather than a split, we can expect that the Junta members and the Chilean military in general will rally together against what they will be inclined to see as another example of the success of the "Marxist-inspired propaganda campaign" against Chile. The cutoff of military assistance for practical purposes has little effect on internal security practices and only weakens Chile in the face of a perceived classic military threat from outside (Peru). It could

[REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED 7

Finally, GOC leaders may take the ban as a sign that the economic blockade they perceive is a growing threat -- i.e., the progressive shutdown of bilateral assistance and a growing reluctance of international financial institutions ^(and as to IFR) to entertain Chilean loan applications.

14. Junta perception of how it is seen by others. We believe that the Junta is convinced, as it has said, that it struck a severe blow at "world Marxism" in September 1973, and that the communist/socialist world is determined to retaliate. The enmity of the USSR, Cuba, and most communist countries can thus be taken for granted. The Junta understands that the PRC and Romania continue to maintain relations for special reasons, and hardly deludes itself that ~~they have any real love for it.~~ ^{Chile is the object of true love} It apparently believes that many Third World countries have been led astray by the USSR, and that some investment of increased diplomatic attention on its part could be productive in that sector.

The Junta considers that the "Marxist propaganda campaign" has unhappily managed to convince an influential segment of US opinion that Chile is a bloody, fascist dictatorship, as it has also done in the UN, in several other countries in Western Europe, and in Mexico. It may recognize that its human rights practices ^(and poor handling of public relations) have played a part in adding an element of truth to the campaign, but it does not consider that these have been serious enough to be the cause of all the external censure. Objectively, human rights violations in Chile have probably been little worse (if indeed worse at all) than those in such

[REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED

other countries in recent years as South Korea, South Vietnam, Greece, Portugal, and Brazil, to say nothing of the USSR and Cuba. The Junta notes that the US, and others, does not take equal exception to the violations in those countries, and is thus led to the conclusion that Chile has been singled out for political reasons. We suspect that the Junta sees a certain domestic political cynicism at work in this arms cutoff to a small, far away country, which cannot retaliate.

Thus the Junta is unlikely to react with real soul-searching, since it considers that the criticism is unfair at best and hypocritical at worst. In the absence of greater pressure, it may eventually react with the same cynicism by attempting to improve its human rights image with measures and pronouncements aimed at catching attention but giving away little or nothing in actual control of the country, or in relaxing its internal security measures.

POL:RSSSteven/CRStout:gkl

Approved:DCM:HBThompson

1.2.74